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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Draft Platform for Action

Addendum

Chapter IV

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

J. Inequality in women's access to and participation in all communications systems, especially the media, and their insufficient mobilization to promote women's contribution to society [Mobilize the media to portray women's contribution to society] [Responsibility of the media for the impact of their content on women] [Women and the media]

161. During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network which transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviours, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women.

162. More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies which influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public, and private, local, national and international media organizations.

163. The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual and audio - must be changed. Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products [are also negatively affecting] [can also negatively affect] women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting. The world-wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately.

164. Women should be empowered by enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology. This will strengthen their ability to combat negative portrayals of women internationally and to challenge instances of abuse of the power of an increasingly important industry. Self-regulatory mechanisms for the media need to be created and strengthened and approaches developed to eliminate gender-biased programming [and excessive control or influence of transnational corporations.] Most women, especially in developing countries, are not able to access effectively the expanding electronic information highways and therefore cannot establish networks that will provide them with alternative sources of information. Women, therefore, need to be involved in decision-making regarding the development of the new technologies in order to participate fully in their growth and impact.

164 bis. In addressing the issue of the mobilization of the media, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into policies and programmes.

Strategic objective J.1. Increase the participation and enhance the access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication

Actions to be taken

165. By Governments:

( ) Support women's education, training and employment to [ensure women's greater access] [promote women's equal] access to all areas and levels of media;

( ) Support research into all aspects of women and the media so as to define areas needing attention and action and review existing media policies with a view to integrating a gender perspective;

(a) Promote women's [full and] equal participation in the media, including management, programming, education, training and research;

(b) Aim at gender balance in the appointment of women and men to all advisory, management, regulatory or monitoring bodies, including those connected to the private and state or public media;

(b) bis. Encourage, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, these bodies to increase the number of programmes for and by women to see to it that women's needs and concerns are properly addressed;

(c) Encourage and recognize women's media networks, including electronic networks and other new technologies of communication, as a means for the dissemination of information and the exchange of views, including at the international level, and support women's groups active in all media work and systems of communications to that end;

new (d) [Encourage and provide the means for the creative use of indigenous cultural forms in the media for the dissemination of information on development and social issues and encourage the development of local media and programming;]

(f) Guarantee the freedom of the media and its subsequent protection within the framework of national law and encourage the positive involvement of the media in development and social issues;

165 bis. By national and international media systems:

( ) Develop, consistent with freedom of expression, regulatory mechanisms, including voluntary ones, that promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women by the media and international communication systems and that promote increased participation by women and men in production and decision-making.

166. By Governments, as appropriate, or national machinery for the advancement of women:

(a) Encourage the development of educational and training programmes for women, to produce information for the mass media, including funding of experimental efforts, and the use of the new technologies of communication, cybernetics space and satellite, whether public or private;

(a) bis. Encourage the use of communication systems, including new technologies, as a means of strengthening women's participation in democratic processes;

(b) Facilitate the compilation of a directory of women media experts;

(c) Encourage the participation of women in the development of [professional guidelines and codes of conduct] [appropriate regulatory mechanisms] to promote balanced and [non-stereotyped] portrayals of women by the media.

167. By non-governmental organizations and media professional associations:

(a) Encourage the establishment of media watch groups that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected;

(b) [Consider] Train women to make greater use of information technology for communication and media;

(c) Create networks among and develop information programmes for non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and professional media organizations in order to recognize the specific needs of women in the media, and facilitate communication, in particular at the international level, in support of South-South and North-South dialogue among and between these organizations;

(d) [Encourage the media industry and education and media training institutions to develop in appropriate languages, traditional, indigenous and other ethnic group forms of media, such as story-telling, drama, poetry and song, and utilize these forms of communication to disseminate information on development and social issues;]

Strategic objective J.2. Promote a [positive] [balanced and non-stereotyped] portrayal of women in the media

Actions to be taken

168. By Governments and international organizations to the extent consistent with freedom of expression:

(a) Promote research and implementation of a strategy of information, education and communication aimed at promoting a balanced portrayal of women and girls, and their multiple roles;

(b) Encourage the media and advertising agencies to develop specific programmes to raise awareness of the Platform for Action;

new (d) Encourage gender-sensitive training for media professionals, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of [positive] [non-stereotyped] images of women in the media;

(d) bis. [Encourage the media to refrain from being a tool for presenting women as inferior beings and exploited as a sexual object and commodity, rather than as a creative human person, a key actor, contributor to and beneficiary of the process of development;]

new (e) Promote the concept that sexist stereotypes displayed in the media are gender discriminatory, degrading in nature and offensive;

new (f) Take effective measures or institute such measures, including appropriate legislation against pornography and the projection of violence against women and children in the media.

169. By the mass media and advertising organizations:

(a) Develop [appropriate regulatory mechanisms] [professional guidelines and codes of conduct] and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women;

(b) [Establish professional guidelines and codes of conduct that address violence, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising;]

(c) Develop a gender perspective on all issues of concern to communities, consumers and civil society.

(a) bis. Increase women's participation in decision-making at all levels of the media.

170. By the media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in collaboration, as appropriate, with national machinery for the advancement of women:

(a) Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns, [which emphasize gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family], and which disseminate information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence;

(b) Produce and/or disseminate media materials on women leaders, inter alia, [as caring mothers and nurturers of happy families] managers and entrepreneurs as role models, particularly to young women;

(b) bis. Promote extensive campaigns making use of public and private educational programmes to disseminate information about the human rights of women, [about the rights of women as provided for in international human rights instruments] with a view to increasing their awareness about their human rights;

(c) [Support the development of new alternative media and the use of all means of communications to disseminate information to and about women and their concerns.] [Develop and finance new alternative media and the use of all means of communication to disseminate information to and about women's issues and their concerns.]

(c) bis. Develop approaches and train experts to apply gender analysis with regard to media programmes.